GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:308
ANSWERED ON:25.02.2000
CLEARANCE TO FILM WATER
ANANT GANGARAM GEETE

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken note of the Hindu religious sensitivities associated with the sacred traditions of the `Ganges` and `Varanasi` in according clearance to the shooting of Deepa Mehta`s film titled `Water`;

(b) the changes have been agreed to between the Government and Deepa Mehta vis- Ã -visthe original text in the light of protests from religious leaders;

(c) whether the Government had consulted and associated Hindu scholars in vetting the text of the film in view of the religious sensitivities associated with it; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefore?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE OF TH DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY)

(a) & (b) : The permission to shoot the film `WATER` has been accorded as perprocedure prescribed for clearance of scripts for shooting of films by foreigners in India in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs who give clearance from security and location angle. The procedure regarding shooting of feature films in India by foreigners is specified in the Visa Manual brought out by the Ministry of External Affairs. Accordingly permission to shoot the film was given subject to certain conditions which were specified in the permission letter. As per procedure, any material deviation from the script approved by the Government should be with the prior permission of this Ministry. In view of this condition, Ms. Deepa Mehta approached this Ministry with a revised version of the script which was duly examined and approved on 02.02.2000, subject to the conditions in the original permission letter.
Shooting of the film is to be done while ensuring that nothing detrimental to the image of India is shot, according to procedure laid down in the Visa Manual. As per procedure, prior to the release of the film anywhere in the world, it has to be shown to a representative of the Government of India in India or in Indian Mission abroad to ensure that it contains nothing objectionable. Further, before release of the film in India, clearance of Central Board of Film Certification is required. One of the guidelines followed by the Board is to ensure that nothing derogatory to any religion is portrayed.

(c) & (d): In view of the above, (c) & (d) are answered.